Cantharides

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An
Essay on
Cantharides
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An
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by
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The natural tendency in the human frame to become diseased, induces Man to seek for the means of relief; and, he has accordingly made every part of the great creation subservient to his purpose: the Mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms, all furnish him with articles for his use; and, it is curious, as well as instructive, to reflect on the different articles which have alternately engrossed the attention of Physicians; some have been extolled in the most extravagant manner in one age, and been found entirely without efficacy in another.

This constant change can only be accounted for, by the extreme imperfection of the knowledge, which the ancients possessed of the economy of the human frame; According as Physicians become more enlightened on this subject, is the effect of Medicine reduced to something more nearly approaching to certainty; they have been taught that it is not upon one remedy

or one combination of remedies, that they are to rely, in the cure of diseases: but, by adapting certain remedies to certain states of the system; thus for instance, peruvian bark, which is universally allowed to be equivalent to the cure of intermittents; if applied in an improper state of the system, will nevertheless fail.

And it is from neglecting this attention to the state of the system, that remedies of so opposite a nature, have been so highly celebrated in the cure of particular diseases:

Physicians at this time, find no difficulty in accounting for the cures of scrofula, which were performed by the Royal touch, recollecting the natural tendency which this disease has to disappear, as the patient approaches the age of puberty. No remedy, to be applied effectually, requires more attention to the state of the system than the Cantharis: a spanish fly, the subject of this essay: this is one amongst the few remedies, which have maintained their position in the revolutions of opinion and changes

of practice which have occured; they are perhaps the most efficacious remedy which we derive from the Animal Kingdom.

The cantharis was not altogether unknown to the Ancients, for Hippocrates the great father of Medicine, it is said administered them internally, their first application for the purpose of exciting a blister, was by a man who lived but a short time before Galen; and it was then the practice to rub them on the head till vesication was produced.

The Arabian Physicians were the first to make a proper application of the fly, but it was a different species from that now in use, the Meloe chicorii; (of Lin:) they are said not to be possessed of such active properties as the common Meloe, from which, they may be distinguished, by their having black legs, whereas in the Meloe Vesicatorius the legs are of the same colour as the body. They are called Spanish flies from the circumstance of their being obtained from Spain, though the largest quantity is now procured

from Italy they are to be found here in most of the countries of Europe.

If these of the Bombyx has been discovered in this country, and could they be obtained in sufficient quantities in a reduced process would increase the revenue of the province, being fully equal in point to the common Mulberry and Bore formal in preference to the other.

The common bite some fly, the Mexico Cochineal is an insect of the beetle kind none a ten time in length of a shining crimson colour, the Antennæ a filter on black, winged, the head is semicircular round, the elytra a long cased soft and flexible, and the head inflected, they mutually create and are seen in swarms; the manner of procuring them is in shaking them from the trees on which they settle, into a sheet and they are then destroyed by the fumes of vinegar. It is said they present a splendid appearance when disturbed at night, the trees on which they rest appearing as if illuminati

with fire; when perfectly dry they are very light, and are not destroyed by keeping, though treated as they are, a part of them is consumed by an insect that reduces them to a fine powder which is extremely active. They have a peculiar nauseous smell, & a nauseous sickly taste; Dr. Cox mentions in his dissertation that the Melolontha vitis is frequently mixed with them and, as they are not possessed of the active property of the common fly, should be picked out before they are produced, they may be distinguished in moist equal bodies.'

The Cantharides have been analyzed in Robiquet, and a peculiar principle discovered on which their blistering property depends; this substance, has been named 'Cantharidin' and tho. it possess the blistering property of the fly, does not contain that which produces strangury; it is soluble in hot alcohol, and again deposited when cold; it is soluble in oil, ether also dissolves it, but not very powerfully.

It is stated in the Pharmacopoeia, that cobalt triples in water, and the injection produces a severe vesication, injurious to the vesicating property, but a trifling to the fresh employed to extract for several times the cantharides. The ointment should be powdered, and the fine part of the powder to add from in water till one third is taken up, and then the solution is very acrid; chloride is alcohol, opened and cut the skin and rub it to separate the air, and then rub it outside thread with a yellow matter, which is the cantharides.

There are various modes of preparing blistering plasters, one which answers very well is to spread a plaster of basilicon ointment and sprinkle the powdered flies over it; an ointment made with a pottom of mustard, capsicum and flies, is frequently kept by the apothecaries, and this almost instantly produces a blister when spread upon leather and applied to the surface of the body, when we

have not the resilient and tough quality of the powdered flies sprinkled over a common poultice will answer very well; and it is observed by Dr. Chapman in his therapeutics that with the common blistering plaster has produced a substituent effect, the application of a poultice will not only produce well pilled vesications, but prevent the occurrence of strangury.

The Cantharides when used internally may be exhibited in powder or tincture, the dose of the former is from gr. ½ to iij, the latter minim ⅛ generally prescribed, the dose of which is from ten to fifty drops, two or three times a day. In an overdose the Cantharides produces very unpleasant effects, distinctness of blood in urine, with intense pain, and sometimes inflammation of the whole intestinal canal, inducing mucous and purulent stools, vomiting, delirium and death. It has been supposed that the Cantharides, possessed the power to increase

the general desire, and although it is one of those medicines which displays a marked affinity to the urinary organs, yet, if it be seen it given without any such effect, and recd. in a great many other instances.

When given internally, they produce a rash upon the surface, and if given in pretty full doses in a proper state of the system will increase the discharge of urine. In chronic cases two or three drams are to be given for this purpose in the bowels, four ounces; in smaller doses, and when the system is in a state of excitement they will not produce otherwise; given as a diuretic they should be accompanied with plenty of drinks, as solution of Gum Arabic, Flaxseed tea &c: as drinking copious of warm liquids has been found the most effectual mode of relieving, as well as preventing strangury. Dr Cullen and others believed that the flies never produced a diuretic effect, but experience the

great tendency to throw them over.

Blisters may be seen to act in the cure of diseases, either in a general or local manner; in the first case they produce a stimulating effect, which either counteracts the exciting morbid action producing the disease. In the second they may produce an irritation on the surface, which is intended by sympathy to the local affection existing in a particular part, and either overcome it or invite it to the surface; in the act of imposition, or rather in the same part at the same time, the weakness must be made to strengthen the necessity for reducing the force of the disease in its incipient, previous to the active action of blisters and then may produce an evacuant effect as in cinnamon &c.

I am now to give some account of the use of blisters and first in the cure of fevers. There has been much controversy respecting their efficacy in this class of

disease some contending that they are of no service whatever, while others consider them as one of our best remedies in combatting the disease; this difference of opinion I imagine has arisen from the different states of the system in which they have been applied, as used before the force of the disease is broken, and while there is great excitement, they will invariably do harm; and if delayed till the system is prostrated too low they will not draw; and if they should, they will not produce the salutary impressions, which they are so well calculated to make when properly timed.

The precise point at which it is proper to resort to blisters has been called the blistering point, and it requires attention on the part of the practitioner to discover and mark it.

This remedy has not been very extensively employed in intermittents, tho. there are many cases recorded where the bark has been used for a long time, without effect the aff.

[illegible] of [illegible] the [illegible] upon [illegible] to its action. Some cases are [illegible] in which [illegible] to the [illegible], so as to be [illegible] the fit [illegible] about the time the paroxysm was expected, so as to prevent its accession.

To the [illegible] from which was [illegible] the present [illegible] be [illegible] extent [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible], and which has [illegible] more [illegible] than is within the recollection of the oldest Inhabitants, blistering has been found peculiarly efficacious, to quiet the irritability of the stomach, and [illegible] the system [illegible] to the action of the bark. This fever prevails [illegible] every autumn in every part of our country, and is generally [illegible] inflammatory cases, blisters used previous to the inflammatory action being reduced, must be [illegible] to increase, instead of [illegible] the disease, in cases attended with great irritability of the stomach, which is a frequent symptom, blisters, [illegible]

be used earlier, and often be applied with the organ.

I have seen a person known to the same [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] be cured by air, in a similar depletion when spasms were observed approaches that were

"Expedients friends relations are numerous
Trust the leader be,
The sweet endearments of the fading world"

and in the threatened dangerous numerous depletions, and intense observations has rendered it certain that the stomach and bowels upon which the greatest force of the disease is exerted, and which is the epitome with which it usurps its victims, that if blisters be employed for a few days only, or even other remedies prove unavailing, prompt and active measures alone can be satisfactory, and as a species of gastritis is produced the most active use of the lancet and blisters constitute our principle resources;

blisters in such cases relieve the distressing sensations of the stomach allay the vomiting and may also be applied to assist the internal remedies when there is great tenderness, and apply directly over the region of the stomach when delirium is present which is frequently the case, a blister to the head has been found of great service to relieve congestion on the brain and the head should be shaved at the time previous to the application as this has been found to prevent the occurrence of strangury.

It was Dr. Hastings's rule to use the blister in this disease if the pain did not interrupt, but if it did, he would then seldom failed to produce an interruption, but consider the great efficacy of blisters in removing the unpleasant and local sensations of the stomach, therefore they will no doubt be found useful in giving the finishing blow to the fever, after the pain has been mitigated by other remedies.

[illegible] of [illegible] in all cases with local inflammation or congestion, they are equally applicable; but their employment should be preceded in bleeding both general and local, and should be applied as near the seat of the local inflammation as possible, and it should be remembered that cupping cannot be applied where a wound or fracture has recently been, or where the application of water, by this means the blister will be rendered more efficacious, and by its action will [illegible] to the [illegible] the remains of the inflammatory [illegible] or healing a new injury [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Typhoid or gastric fever attended with an increased determination of blood to the head, producing [illegible] pain, determination to blood to the head, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the proper remedy, after which a blister to [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible]

frequently produces the most salutary effects; in the sinking stages of this disease blisters, to the extremities are one of the most [illegible] resources in relieving [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible]; even that [illegible] [illegible] blisters [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], the [illegible] [illegible] is [illegible] taken that no [illegible] action come to a piece, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]; when [illegible] applied the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] this disease [illegible] [illegible] a solution of the fever.

The [illegible] of [illegible] pleuro-pneumonia perhaps [illegible] not present an exception to the [illegible] blistering [illegible] in some of these diseases than one [illegible] the most valuable of the physicians resources; in all the inflammatory affections, & the abdominal viscera, blisters [illegible] be [illegible] advantageously to [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible], in such a state of the

[illegible] in this disease, that [illegible] is
[illegible] with [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
must [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] blistering [illegible]
[illegible] of the same nature, as also purgatives,
and [illegible], though [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] the stomach [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] attended with a
good effect; in the last stage of the disease
[illegible] [illegible] recommends a large one to
be applied over the abdomen, since in such
cases [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] produce a [illegible]
[illegible] effect. He [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] to be all. He believes the distinguishing
[illegible] of stomach disease, which so [illegible]
[illegible] the patient of his life as this, one should
be [illegible], something more powerful than the
common blistering plaster is required, and it
has been recommended to make use of the
nitric acid, by means of a feather dipped
in it and brushed over the lower of the
stomach, this will produce very speedily the
vesicating effect of the flies, and in a [illegible]

counter irritant and another very powerful
to diseases of lungs or pleura are applied
as preventive to contraction of chest as an
anti-spasmodic in tetanus they are much used.
In those diseases of the chest painters are
so liable, and where the spasm resists the
operation of the most active cathartics the
wrists are frequently blistered, in such cases
a blister to the abdomen will induce tol-
ration of the cathartic dose, and generally
cure. If the inflammatory affection be
so severe that we are generally apprehensive
of that species of pneumonia where there is a
congested state of the lungs, so much blood is
taken out of the general circulation, that a
large bleeding might be attended with
fatal effects, in such cases to avoid
local bleedings, and a large blister to the
thorax is a valuable auxiliary in the pneu-
monic form, where there is an inflammatory
of the pleura. Instances of the lumbar blisters
have been invited to prevent the use of

of the lungs, but such a practice should be hazardous, and it is thought that our mothers and grandfathers, although practitioners of medicine, have sometimes in their zeal, made use of the lancet in cases where it should not have been used, and blisters are of the greatest service when made to perform the extension and to the incipient stage of pulmonary disease, and other moderate depleting remedies this disease may frequently be avoided, but after it is once fairly established, operations will not, as a general rule, cure it; some of the other more obscure affections of the chest may be relieved by blisters such as asthma particularly.

Blisters are used in most of the affections of the head, in Ophthalmia it is doubtful how applied, but it is used during the period of inflammation, and relieves the

to be continued

[illegible]

In the [illegible] of [illegible] birds [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

to the application [illegible] inflammation, it is [illegible] by applying them [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] a [illegible] in [illegible] is [illegible] the [illegible] benefit from a blister [illegible] [illegible] in a case of this form disease; gangrene is [illegible] to be dreaded in [illegible] cases.

Our remedy is [illegible] in many of the exanthematous affections. It [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] physicians [illegible] to their complete [illegible]; blisters, [illegible] some of its unpleasant effects, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] advantage, the [illegible] application to the [illegible] of the Catarrha, and other unpleasant symptoms attendant on Measles. Variola when complicated with an affection of the throat, is [illegible] advantageously by blisters freely applied.

They are a most valuable remedy in arresting the progress of erysipelatous inflammations, and it was from their being [illegible] in this disease that Dr. Physick was induced to try their effects in arresting the progress

A glandular, cancer, they are equally useful
in the relief from a painful or anxious
disease, or in the first instances a true
palliative. There are in addition which
is known derived from their use; in opthalmia
they constitute an excellent mode of depletion
& a means of applied directly over the eye,
only obtaining the lids with a small hole
or aperture, leaving the discharge of humour
free, power is universally acknowledged.

The practice of applying leeches to the
neck veins, or lungs, is not the common opin-
ion; venesection is one of the most im-
portant, but such the science of medicine is
entitled to the incomplete & Principle
of life of the fluids, it be applied when
the circulation of the blood.

It only remains for me to give some
account of their use internally administering
they were given in this way by Hippocrates
& Galen, & it has not been a long known
practitioner of medicine, one principal

administered them in the usual manner
in triplicate & the in clinical practice,
but his own mind to eliminate the
habit of the practice, from the opinion
in the minds opinion and their stimulating
properties than are not entirely, in some
of the diseases of these organs. Three months
a case of obstinate and complete cure
in a short time by the use of the tincture
taken twice daily. Dr. Jones recommends
in treating the following formulas
have been marked advantage, formed in
an obstinate case which had resisted
every other remedy it produces an aqueous
glow upon the surface and diminishes
the diseases in a short time.

℞. Vinum Cantharis ℥j
Aq. Rosa ℥ij m. the

dose of which is a table spoonful three
times daily. In Amenorrhœa these have been kept
desired from the inhibition of the function
and omitted to mention when operative of

blisters, the efficacy of one applies to the sac=
=rum in this disease, and in obstinate cases
much benefit will be derived from such
applications

Dr. Hosack of New York in his appendix
to the modern practice of physic, says there
is no article of the Materia Medica, which
will produce such good effects in impotency
from weakness of the seminal organs as the
fly, he gives twenty five or thirty drops of the
tincture, and increases it in a day or two to
forty or fifty drops three times a day; much
perseverence, and regularity, is required in
its use, to be of service; it sometimes will
give relief in a short time, and in other cases
years will be required to remove the
disease, after taking it a short time the
patient generally experiences some little
difficulty in passing his urine, and this,
if it does not increase may be disregarded,
but if it should, it will then be necessary to
intermit the medicine for a few days, till this

inconvenience is removed, when it should be again resorted to till the like effect is produced; patients labouring under this disease should be cheered with the prospect of a speedy cure being held out to them, for they too often give themselves up to despair with all its horrors, and considering their case as hopeless neglect taking the Medicines.

I have now brought to a conclusion this essay; and have only to regret, that it is not more worthy of being offered to the university, from which I hope to derive the honors which the industrious and deserving student can alone obtain.

Conv. der Niere — Pest — Insp. Eitr.

Sig. Int. — apopl. u. Pneumon.

Bronchitis

affinity —

Concussion — Compression